

Inside Region 3

Information From the Accomplishment Reporting System

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Ohio Among Eight States To Receive Federal Funds for Major Boating Projects

Ohio's Middle Bass Island State Park will receive \$861,383 in federal funds to expand facilities for Lake Erie boaters, according to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Ohio joins Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi, Oregon, South Carolina, Virginia, and Washington in sharing \$4.4 million in grants for nine boating facility projects to receive funding in 2002.

The grants are the second round of awards made under the Boating Infrastructure Grant (BIG) program, administered by the Service. The funding is authorized by the Sportfishing and Boating Safety Act of 1998 and funded in part by excise taxes on motorboat fuel. BIG grant program funds are aimed at improving docking facilities for transient, non-trailerable boats along the navigable waterways of the United States.

"Thanks to the BIG program, millions of people will be able to enjoy greater and better recreational and fishing opportunities off America's shores," said Service Acting Director Marshall Jones.

"The BIG program is a big deal for recreational boat owners who will now have the opportunity to visit more state and local parks and historic sites which heretofore were inaccessible by boat," added Boat U.S. Vice President Michael Sciulla.

The BIG program provides states with funding for: mooring buoys; day-docks; transient slips; safe harbor facilities (including safe anchorage or a harbor of refuge during a storm); float

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--Photo by Scott Flaherty

EPA Administrator Visits Minnesota Valley NWR

Rick Schultz, manager of Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge in Bloomington, Minn., explains the refuge's wildlife values and geography to Gov. Christie Whitman, administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency during Whitman's visit to the Refuge Jan. 25. The refuge hosted an afternoon press conference for the EPA. For more, see page 3.

North America's First International Refuge Michigan's Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge Added to Refuge System

The efforts of an unprecedented partnership of federal, state, county and local governments, private industry, conservation groups and citizens to improve the quality of life along an enduring industrial river in Detroit, Mich., paid off December 21, 2001, when President George W. Bush signed a bill officially creating the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge.

The refuge, the first international refuge in North America, will conserve, protect and restore habitat for 29 species of waterfowl, 65 kinds of fish and 300 species of migratory birds on more than 5,000

acres along the lower Detroit River in Michigan and Canada.

The refuge includes islands, coastal wetlands, marshes, shoals and riverfront lands along 18 miles of the Lower Detroit River from Zug Island south to the southern boundary of Sterling State Park in Monroe County, Michigan. The new refuge also includes Mud Island and Grassy Island, lands managed by the Service as Wyandotte National Wildlife Refuge (NWR). The 330-acre Wyandotte

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Region To Manage Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge

NWR will be re-designated part of Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge.

"As managers of the refuge, one of our first initiatives will be to reach out and engage partners and citizens and involve them in the planning process, to help us plot conservation and recreation decisions for the future of the refuge," said Refuge Manager Doug Spencer. "As a new member of the National Wildlife Refuge System, it is our policy to make areas of this refuge open to hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, wildlife photography, environmental education and environmental interpretation."

The refuge is a result of a unprecedented partnership of government agencies, businesses, conservation groups, landowners and private citizens on both sides of the border who came together to improve the quality of life on the Lower Detroit River. The refuge is also a key component of the Downriver Linked Greenways Initiative, a community-based program that seeks to build "green" infrastructure and create outdoor recreational opportunities in Wayne County, Mich. The public-private partnership gained momentum over the past year through a series of intricate cooperative agreements, land exchanges and acquisitions involving governments, private businesses, citizens and conservation groups.

In March 2001, Michigan Representative John D. Dingell introduced legislation to create the refuge. The bill, H.R. 1230, encourages public-private partnerships to promote wildlife conservation and habitat restoration while protecting private property rights. The bill also authorizes the Service to acquire future lands for the refuge through cooperative agreements, donations or to buy outright from willing sellers at fair market value. Similarly,



Herb Gray, Deputy Prime Minister of Canada and Susan Whelan, member of Canadian Parliament, are working to enact the Canadian component of

the international refuge.

"The creation of an international wildlife refuge is a significant step towards restoring the health and vitality of this invaluable natural resource," Dingell said. "The legislation demonstrates how, working as a team, federal, state and local officials in the United States and in Canada can work with businesses, conservationists and citizens to create something special that will improve the quality of life for all our citizens."

The Lower Detroit River contains shipping channels and shoals and islands that serve as habitat for numerous fish and wildlife. Located at the intersection of the Atlantic and Mississippi Flyways, an estimated three million ducks, geese, swans and coots migrate annually through the region. More than 300,000 diving ducks stop each year to feed on wild celery beds in the river.

The Canada-United States North American Waterfowl Management Plan has identified the Detroit River as part of one of 34 waterfowl habitat areas of major concern in the U.S. and Canada. (Lower Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Basin.)

The Detroit River is also known for its duck hunting and fishing opportunities, activities the Service plans to continue on parts of the refuge.

"Among our first goals will be to establish hunting and fishing plans that provide ample opportunities for these activities while incorporating refuge goals and conserving habitat," Spencer said. "Long term, restoring habitat on refuge land will benefit hunters and fishers all along the river." *Scott Flaherty, External Affairs*

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Ohio to Receive \$861,383 For Boating Activity Projects

ing and fixed piers and breakwaters; dinghy docks; restrooms; retaining walls; bulkheads; dockside utilities; pump-out stations, trash collection and recycling facilities; dockside electric, water and telephone capabilities; navigational aids; and marine fueling stations.

The grant awarded to Ohio will fund several projects at Middle Bass Island State Park on Lake Erie, including harbor enlargement; repair and restoration of a seawall; and installation of 30 docks accommodating up to 60 transient boats. Docks will be 35 to 40 feet long and will be available for short-term rentals up to 10 days. These projects augment improvements made under the 2001 BIG program and when complete will offer boaters a total of 86 docks, with space for 170 transient boats.

BIG transient facilities must be built in waters deep enough for boats 26 feet and larger to navigate a minimum of six feet of depth at low tide. One-time dredging is allowed to provide access between open water and tie-up facilities.

BIG program funds are being distributed each year over a four-year period ending in 2003. To ensure that each State gets a share, funding is provided on a two-tiered basis. For tier-one grants, all States are eligible to receive up to \$100,000 per grant cycle as long as their proposals meet the program's guidelines. Tier-two projects are designed for larger, more expensive projects and are awarded on a competitive basis.

The nine tier-two grants were selected from 58 proposals submitted from across the country. Acting Director Jones decided to fund the nine projects based upon recommendations received from a panel of Service Regional staff as well as those submitted by the Sport Fishing and Boating Partnership Council. *Georgia Parham, External Affairs*

Minnesota Valley Refuge Hosts EPA Press Conference

An exceptionally warm late January weather, combined with an abundance of bright midday sun made an idyllic setting for a national announcement of a new watershed protection initiative. Christie Whitman, administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced the new initiative during an afternoon visit to Minnesota Valley NWR Jan. 25.

Governor Whitman used the Minnesota River as a backdrop to announce a \$21 million grant program which is being set up to improve water quality in up to 20 watershed basins across the country. The program proposal will be included in President Bush's 2003 budget. EPA will receive recommendations from each state, and will then determine which projects will receive funding.

In addition to Whitman, the refuge hosted members of the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency and scores of visitors and members of the news media.

Refuge Manager Rick Schultz and Minnesota Pollution Control Agency Director Karen Studders met prior to the press conference, taking a few minutes to view the Minnesota River Valley from the overlook behind the Visitor Center. Schultz took the opportunity to detail some of the good work being accomplished at Minnesota Valley, particularly



—photo by Scott Flaherty

Refuge manager Rick Schultz welcomes a visiting state officials and news media to Minnesota Valley NWR.

in the area of environmental education targeted to the diverse populations of metro area elementary school students.

Schultz later began the press conference by informing the media and visitors about the refuge, the national wildlife refuge system and its upcoming Centennial celebration. Following a brief remark by Studders, Gov. Whitman announced the EPA initiative.

"I think water is going to be the major environmental challenge of the 21st century, and a large part of that is because non-point source pollution is the bulk of

the degradation that is occurring now," Whitman said. "President Bush understands the importance of watershed protection and he is taking action to make America's waterways cleaner and healthier for the families that enjoy them."

Gov. Whitman added that Minnesotans have a special relationship with watersheds. "In a land of 10,000 lakes, it could be said that Minnesota is one great watershed," she said. *Scott Ford, Minnesota Valley NWR*

Lake Sturgeon Status Assessment Project Begins

Participants in the Lake Michigan lake sturgeon status assessment project met Dec. 18 to share expertise, coordinate and standardize activities, and discuss a number of issues relating to implementing the project's first field season that begins this spring. The project is funded by the Great Lakes Fishery Trust and the Giovanni Auletta Armenise Harvard Foundation.

The meeting was convened by Rob Elliott of the Service's Green Bay Fishery Resources Office (FRO) who serves as project manager. Seventeen people attended, including principal investigators and researchers from eight agencies and institutions involved in this project. Dur-

ing the meeting, agencies reported on the status of each sub-project. The pros and cons of various sampling strategies for each river system were discussed. The methods and levels of sampling appropriate for each river system were discussed, plans for issuing individual and project-wide collector's permits were shared, and plans for needed equipment acquisitions were made.

Additional progress includes advertising for and selecting five graduate students and initiating their graduate projects, the hiring of technicians, submission of an announcement for a Term position with the Service, the ordering of gear and materials for field collections, study

site visitation and preliminary gear testing in some rivers, and initiation of assessments in 2001 for data and sample collection in a few rivers.

The first year's funding from the Great Lakes Fishery Trust was received by the Service in December and is being distributed through cooperative agreements. The first year's funding from the Giovanni Auletta Armenise Harvard Foundation is being distributed by the Wisconsin DNR.

The three-year study will provide the first comprehensive assessment of the status of lake sturgeon throughout Lake Michigan. *Robert Elliott, Green Bay Fishery Resources Office*

Service to Examine Impacts of Recreation on Protected Gray Wolves at Voyageurs National Park in Northern Minnesota

As part of a formal consultation process called for by the Endangered Species Act, the Service announced Feb. 1 that it was modifying portions of its 1992 Biological Opinion that recommended the park restrict use of motorized vehicles on selected frozen bays in the park. The modified language essentially lifts the previous restrictions which were implemented with the intent of minimizing harm to the wolf.

Biologists from the Service have examined new findings from the National Park Service that relate to the effects of winter recreation activities on gray wolves at Voyageurs National Park in northern Minnesota.

"As part of our formal consultation 10 years ago with Voyageurs National Park, we requested that the park investigate whether human activity in and around the park results in adverse cumulative impacts to the gray wolf" said Dan Stinnett, field supervisor of the Service's Twin Cities Field Office. "The new information reveals that, among other findings, bay closure has no biological significance to a healthy gray wolf population at Voyageurs National Park."

The modifications to the Biological Opinion are based on nine years of wolf research conducted in the park that determined closing the bays specifically for wolf protection was unwarranted.

"While we have modified our language regarding restrictions on the bays, the main tenets of our 1992 Biological Opinion are still in place," Stinnett said. "We continue to recognize the potential for inter-



--photo by Scott Flaherty

According to the National Park Service, gray wolf densities at Voyageurs National Park range between 32-46 wolves per 1,000 square kilometers.

action between wolves and humans at the park and, with the new information, can determine if other measures are needed to minimize the likelihood of adverse impacts. Additionally, all measures necessary to protect areas important to the federally-threatened bald eagle remain in effect at the park."

Approximately two-thirds of the park's 218,054 acres are closed to snowmobiles and available to gray wolves, its prey and other wildlife. Lifting restrictions in the bays will provide an additional 4,667 acres of frozen lake surface to winter park users.

In 1992, the Service issued a Biological Opinion that addressed the impact of recreational activities on federally-threatened bald eagles and gray wolves in the park along the Minnesota-Canada border. While impacts were determined not to jeopardize the continued existence of either species, the Service recommended park managers adopt prudent management actions, including restricted motorized vehicle activities, at 17 bays in winter for gray wolves. It also recommended the Park Service determine whether the cumulative impacts of human activity in and around the park would lead to higher incidence of adverse human and gray wolf contact.

Park managers adopted the Service's recommendations and restricted winter snowmobiling in specific bay areas. With Service concurrence, restrictions were lifted on six of the 17 bays in 1997.

The Park Service also began its own study to assess the cumulative impact of human activities on wolf behavior in the park. The results of research performed over the Park Service's nine-year study indicated that closure of the bays had "no discernable or identifiable effect on where wolves go and what they do in the park," and, that continued restrictions on motorized vehicles in fragmented bay areas was unwarranted. As a result, Park managers lifted the restrictions it had placed on snowmobiling in the bays in November 2001. *Scott Flaherty, External Affairs*

Freshwater Mussels Surveyed on Sokaogon Chippewa Reservation

Biologists from the Ashland Fishery Resources Office (FRO) and Sokaogon Chippewa Community (SCC) recently conducted a survey for freshwater mussels on several streams and one lake in the reservation boundary and surrounding area. SCC fisheries biologist Mike Pruett and Service fisheries biologist Glenn Miller conducted the surveys Jan. 14

on waters the SCC is using as water quality monitoring stations.

Biologists collected mussels at each site, recording necessary biological information (length and height measurements of the shells, age and sex, if possible) and checked for gravidity. The mussels were then returned to the location from which they were collected.

Three of the sites are being recommended as possible monitoring sites, utilizing the mussels as bio-indicators along with the water quality data being collected by the SCC. These sites would be monitored every two to four years for any changes in species numbers and composition. *Glenn Miller, Ashland Fishery Resources Office*

East Lansing Field Office Hosts North American Plover Researchers

The Service's East Lansing Field Office in conjunction with other federal and state resource agency partners, hosted the first-ever gathering of plover researchers and managers for the 2002 Meeting on North American Plover Species at Risk Jan.23-24 in Ann Arbor, Mich.

More than 120 attendees from 23 states and four Canadian provinces came to share information, present recent research and discuss common issues relating to plover conservation.

More than 30 authors gave oral presentations on topics ranging from habitat use to population modeling. The program included talks on topics as diverse as population status, predator management, winter distribution, outreach and land use planning for shoreline conservation. Researchers also reported on the results



Piping plover

of recent studies on plover biology. Break-out discussion groups were organized following each day's technical session. Topics included the international census, outreach, banding, winter/breeding cooperation, and predator management.

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources' new video, "The

Piping Plover...An Endangered Bird of the Great Lakes Coastline," was also available for viewing during the discussion sessions.

On Wednesday evening, attendees gathered to meet poster authors and discuss the numerous projects on display. Fourteen poster papers were presented by authors that included the National Park Service, USDA Wildlife Services, the Corps of Engineers and a number of universities. Materials and equipment used in plover field research and conservation were also displayed.

Participants left the meeting with greater knowledge of plover ecology, new approaches to solving complex issues, and a renewed enthusiasm for conservation. *Jack Dingledine, East Lansing Field Office*



Photo by Judy Plunkett

Mingo Refuge Thanks Volunteers

Rick McLean (right) receives a plaque from Molly Mehl of Mingo National Wildlife Refuge recognizing him as the 2001 Mingo NWR Volunteer of the Year. The award was presented during a recent banquet honoring the efforts of refuge

volunteers who donated nearly 1,800 hours to the refuge during 2001. Volunteers helped complete numerous projects such as overlook rehabilitation, children's activity guides, road grading, and the planting of food plots. Molly Mehl, Mingo NWR

Published Report Supports Use of Toxicity Equivalency Approach for Wildlife Risk Assessment

The Service's Environmental Contaminants Specialists Lisa Williams and Tim Kubiak worked with the U.S. Geological Survey and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to publish, "Workshop Report on the Application of 2,3,7,8-TCDD Toxicity Equivalence Factors to Fish and Wildlife" (EPA/630/R-01/002).

This report documents peer-reviewed consensus that the toxicity equivalency methodology is technically appropriate for evaluating risk to fish, birds, and mammals associated with dioxin-like compounds including polychlorinated dibenzop-dioxins (PCDDs), furans (PCDFs), and biphenyls (PCBs).

The EPA can now move forward in using this approach in setting water quality criteria and remediation goals that will be more protective than setting them based on individual compounds in turn.

The workshop that led to this report was the direct result of the Service's 1995 Biological Opinion on U.S. EPA's Great Lakes Water Quality Guidance. *Lisa Williams, East Lansing Field Office*

Service Hosts Public Meetings to Discuss Double-Crested Cormorant Issues in Wisconsin and Michigan

The Service hosted public meetings last month in Wisconsin and Michigan to gather comments and discuss its recently released draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) on double-crested cormorant management in the United States.

The Service-sponsored meetings (Jan. 7 in Green Bay, Wis., and Jan. 8 in Mackinaw City, Mich.) were two of 10 public meetings held in nine states and the District of Columbia to gather public input on double-crested cormorant management issues.

The draft EIS analyzes various options for managing rapidly growing cormorant populations in order to reduce conflicts with recreational fishing, commercial aquaculture, and other birds and natural resources.

Cormorants have been federally protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act since 1972, a period when their populations had dropped precipitously due to use of the pesticide DDT, killings by humans and the overall declining health of many ecosystems, especially that of the Great Lakes. Today, the population is at historic highs, due in large part to the presence of ample food in their summer and winter ranges, federal and state protection, and reduced contaminant levels.

Between 1970 and 1991, in the Great Lakes region of the United States and Canada the number of double-crested cormorant nests increased from 89 to 38,000, with an average annual increase of 29 percent. By 1997, the Great Lakes population had reached approximately 93,000 pairs. The total population of double-crested cormorants in the U.S. and Canada has most recently been estimated at approximately 2 million birds.

The population resurgence of double-crested cormorants has led



The number of Great Lakes' nest sites for the double-crested cormorant have increased by more than 29 percent annually since 1970. Approximately 93,000 pairs were recorded in 1997.

to increasing concern about the birds' impact on commercial and recreational fishery resources. The draft EIS evaluates six management alternatives, including such options as continuing or expanding current management practices, implementing only non-lethal management techniques, issuing a new Depredation Order to address public resource conflicts (the Service's proposed alternative), reducing cormorant populations at a regional level, and establishing frameworks for a cormorant hunting season.

The Service's proposed action would establish a new Depredation Order authorizing state, tribal, and federal land management agencies to implement a double-crested cormorant management program, while maintaining federal oversight of populations via reporting and moni-

toring requirements to ensure sustainable populations. Control activities carried out under this new depredation order would take place on public and private lands and waters where double-crested cormorant populations are having a negative impact on public resources such as fish, plants and other wildlife. Under this action, the 1998 Aquaculture Depredation Order would continue to allow cormorants to be taken at commercial freshwater aquaculture facilities and State-owned fish hatcheries in 13 States and would be expanded to include winter roost control by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Wildlife Services Program in those States. A Service regulation prohibiting lethal control of cormorants under most circumstances at National Fish Hatcheries would be revoked.

The public is being asked to provide written comments on the EIS. Comments must be received by February 28, 2002. Comments may be mailed or delivered to the Division of Migratory Bird Management, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 4401 N. Fairfax Drive, Room 634, Arlington, Virginia 22203. In addition, comments on the DEIS may be submitted via electronic mail (e-mail) to : cormorant_eis@fws.gov, or via fax at (703) 358-2272.

Requests for copies of the DEIS should be mailed to Chief, Division of Migratory Bird Management, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 4401 N. Fairfax Drive, Room 634, Arlington, Virginia 22203. Copies of the DEIS can also be downloaded from the Division of Migratory Bird Management web site at: <http://migratorybirds.fws.gov/issues/cormorant/cormorant.html>. For further information, call the division at (703) 358-1714.

Region Hosts First-Ever National Junior Duck Stamp Conference

Junior Duck Stamp Program coordinators from 26 states, the District of Columbia and every Service Region attended the first-ever National Junior Duck Stamp Coordinator Conference Jan. 22 - 24, at Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge in Bloomington, Minn. In addition to state and federal agencies, representatives from several non-governmental organizations attended.

Region 3 Chief of the National Wildlife Refuge System Nita Fuller welcomed the participants. Terry Bell, acting federal duck stamp director and National Junior Duck Stamp Coordinator spoke candidly on the status of the Junior Duck Stamp Program and challenged the participants to generate a list of recommendations for the Program which she could carry back to Washington, DC.

Terry Bell also recognized Steve Wilds, Region 3 chief of migratory birds for setting a precedent for the nation. Within the National Wildlife Refuge System, Steve Wilds is the first to provide actual funding to the Junior Duck Stamp Programs in all of the states in Region 3.

The conference included presentations on the history of both the Federal and Junior Duck Stamp Programs, waterfowl identification, the basics of running a Junior Duck Stamp Program, the Junior Duck Stamp Curriculum and state standards of education, outreach and teacher resource materials, and partnerships and grant writing. Participants also heard from the philatelic community, teachers, parents, artists and three National Junior Duck Stamp winners.

Participatory sessions allowed for the participants to highlight their state programs and what works for them. One brainstorming session was held on "Marketing the Junior Duck Stamp," and another on the Junior Duck Stamp Program carving a niche for itself in the 2003 Centennial.

A powerful visioning session addressed coordinator needs at the state level and the formation of concrete recommendations and action items. The coordinators voiced their vision for expanding and improving the program at the national level



--photo by Steve Kufirin

Former winning national Junior Duck Stamp artists Becky (center) and Bonnie Latham(right) join their mother Karen Latham to talk about different mediums used in their duck stamp art.



Conference attendees included three recent winners of the National Junior Duck Stamp Program including Aremy McAnn, whose trumpeter swan (left) won the 2001 contest, and Bonnie Latham, whose Northern pintails (right) won the 2000 contest.

in coming years. Bringing together the creative and passionate juices of the Junior Duck Stamp Coordinators made for a powerful conference. The overall success of the conference is reflected in the remarks provided in the participant evaluation. "The information more than met my expectations! The ideas, materials, and networking will prove invaluable in expanding our state's Junior Duck Stamp Program." "I really enjoyed and learned lots at this conference. It was the best overall week conference I've ever been to. The amount of ideas and synergy is incredible." "Having Aremy McCann and the Latham Family were special details. Great balance of waterfowl, stamps, art, share time and planning." "I

had a feeling of isolation about the program before coming to this workshop. Now I have a renewed feeling of motivation and plenty of contacts." "Absolutely met my expectations! I didn't expect to come at the program from so many angles. It really added to my ability to spread the word about the program."

In 12 years the Junior Duck Stamp Program has grown from a pilot project with two states participating to its current status of all 50 states plus the District of Columbia and it is now expanding to include U.S. Territories as well.

For more information contact Anne Shea at 612-713-5269 or Judie Miller at 952-858-0712. *Judith Miller, Minnesota Valley NWR*

Public Workshops Will Examine Restoring Perch to Green Bay

The Lake Michigan Fisheries Forum is planning a series of three public workshops this winter to develop recommendations on how to bring back yellow perch to Green Bay, Wis. Established by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR), the Forum is a 13 member advisory committee of sport and commercial fishers, members of the public and resource agency representatives that provides informed recommendations on Lake Michigan fish management issues.

Sport and commercial fishers and Wisconsin DNR fishery biologists are very concerned about the decline of yellow

perch in Green Bay. The Forum will organize three workshops to develop a common understanding of yellow perch problems in Green Bay, and develop management recommendations for the Wisconsin DNR. The workshops will be open to the public.

Mark Holey, project leader of the Service's Green Bay Fishery Resources Office (FRO) is a member of the Forum and serves on the workshop steering committee. Fishery Biologist Chuck Bronte, also from the Green Bay FRO, serves on another committee with Holey to identify and invite experts to make

presentations at the workshops.

Declining numbers of yellow perch in Green Bay have been attributed to the dramatic increase in cormorants, excessive sport and commercial fishing pressure, and to interactions with exotic fish species such as white perch, zebra mussels and carp. The workshops will explore the mechanisms for the decline in the yellow perch numbers and prioritize the available management actions to reverse their decline.

Mark Holey, Green Bay Fishery Resources Office

New Video Highlights Benefits of Drawdown on Mississippi River's Pool 8

A new video titled, "Renewing the River – Water Level Management on the Upper Mississippi River" is being finalized by the interagency Water Level Management Task Force (WLMTF). The video provides an overview of an experimental 1.5-foot drawdown conducted last summer on Pool 8 of the Upper Mississippi River near LaCrosse, Wis., and Brownsville, Minn., to restore aquatic vegetation in the pool.

The abundance of vegetation has declined since construction of Lock and Dam 8 about 60 years ago. The WLMTF is interested in conducting a similar but smaller drawdown this summer to restore more aquatic vegetation.

The video will be shown at a series of public workshops February 11, 12 and 14 to gather information from the public on the 2002 proposal. Partners in the effort include the Minnesota and Wisconsin Departments of Natural Resources and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. *Gary Wege, Twin Cities Field Office*

Public Contributes to Plans For Potential Tobico Marsh Restoration

More than 30 local residents met with representatives from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, and General Motors Jan. 30, to share information on the potential restoration of Tobico Marsh. A settlement for natural resources damages in Saginaw River and Bay provides for restoration work in the marsh, located along Saginaw Bay near Bay City, Mich. The scoping meeting helped collect information on water fluctuations and other issues relating to the

marsh before the parties to the settlement develop proposed alternatives for restoration. Local residents raised concerns about potential impacts from a nearby landfill and provided a historical perspective on the marsh and Great Lakes water levels.

The goal of this project is to restore natural water fluctuations for this 1,300 acre marsh and improve its connection to Saginaw Bay. *Lisa Williams, East Lansing Field Office*

June's North American Prairie Conference Will Gather Experts and Advocates For Prairie Restoration

Service employees involved in prairie conservation are invited to attend the 18th North American Prairie Conference June 23-27 in Kirksville, Mo. The conference, co-sponsored by the Service's Columbia Field Office, will gather as many prairie experts, enthusiasts and advocates as possible to share knowledge, ideas and to build partnerships for prairie restoration and reconstruction.

The meeting will include symposia, contributed papers, posters, workshops and field trips. The deadline for submitting abstracts and presentations is Feb. 15. However, late abstracts (within rea-

son) will be accepted.

Presentations should address the following themes:

- Prairie restoration and reconstruction.
- Importance of biodiversity to society
- Legislative and organizational initiatives to preserve prairie
- Prairie education and outreach
- Prairie as pollution control and environmental improvement.

For more information, contact Kelly Srigley-Werner, Missouri Private Lands Coordinator (573) 876-1911 ext. 112.

Kelly Srigley-Werner, Missouri Private Lands Office

50 Degrees in January?

Upper Mississippi Refuge Hosts Ice Fishing Workshop

The day was a warm 50 degrees but the fun of ice fishing didn't get missed in the warm temperature. About 30 kids and adults participated in an ice fishing clinic sponsored by the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge on Jan. 31. "We partnered with the Minnesota DNR - MinnAqua Program and the 4-H Extension Office to organize the event," said Interpretive Specialist Cindy Samples. "The Friends of the Mississippi River Refuges always come through with the food and help when we organize an event like this."

Participants spent about an hour inside the Lake Park Lodge on Lake Winona learning how to ice fish. Kathy Beaulieu, an education specialist with the MinnAqua program, instructed the group in basic ice fishing rules and techniques. Beaulieu also helped out with last year's event. She went over basic ice fishing rules and techniques. Outside, Service staff were drilling holes in the ice for the group. Watershed biologist, Tex Hawkins and bio-techs, Brian Pember and Brian Stemper scouted out the ice for safe fishing. They drilled holes for the participants and set up ice shacks. Although



--photo by Cindy Samples

Brian Pember (left) and "Tex" Hawkins use a gas-powered auger to drill fishing holes on a frozen stretch of the Mississippi River.

the shacks weren't needed to ward off cool temps, for some participants it was their first time inside a shack.

Each participant made a jig stick (ice fishing pole) and, led by Service and Volunteer fishing guides, hit the ice for some

fishing. As for fishing successes, nine year-old, Tim Brule said, "You might catch something later." *Cindy Samples, Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge*

Accomplishment Reports Received

The following reports were processed by the Accomplishment Reporting System between Jan. 10 and Feb. 9, 2002. Employees can search reports using the Report Manager utility in the ARS. The ARS database contains more than 3,500 accomplishment reports filed since August 1999.

1. More than 11,700 Wood Ducks Banded During Summer of 2001

Sean Kelly, Migratory Birds & State Programs

2. Local Conservation & Sports Groups Interested in NRDA Restoration

Colette Charbonneau, Green Bay Field Office

3. New Video Highlights Benefits of Drawdown on Mississippi River's Pool 8

Gary Wege, Twin Cities Field Office

4. Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission Comes Rescues Ashland FRO

Frank Stone, Ashland FRO

5. Division of Migratory Birds Assists With Arctic Canada Goose Work

Sean Kelly, Migratory Birds & State Programs

6. Three Convicted in Illegal Killing of Alaskan Brown Bear

Ed Spoon, Madison LE

7. 375 Attend 8th Annual Winterfest at Sherburne NWR

Nancy Haugen, Sherburne NWR

8. Computer Support for Field Stations - Advanced

Frank Stone, Ashland FRO

9. 2001 Lake Huron Lake Trout Strain Evaluation Complete

Emily Zollweg, Alpena FRO

10. Here Fishy, Fishy

Cynthia Samples, UMRNW&FR-HQ

11. Quick Response Research Funding for 2002

Sean Kelly, Migratory Birds & State Programs

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Accomplishment Reports Received

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12. Public Contributes Information for Tobico Marsh Restoration

Lisa Williams, East Lansing Field Office

13. Chequamegon Bay Zebra Mussel Task Force to Increase Efforts for 2002

Gary Czypinski, Ashland FRO

14. WET & WILD Workshop Co-hosted by Seney NWR

Marianne Kronk, Seney NWR

15. Process Coded Wire Tags to Evaluate Lake Trout Restoration

Stewart Cogswell, Green Bay FRO

16. EPA Director Visits Minnesota Valley NWR

Scott Ford, Minnesota Valley NWR

17. National Junior Duck Stamp Conference Makes a Big Splash

Judith Miller, Minnesota Valley NWR

18. Mingo NWR Says "Thanks to the Volunteers"

Molly Mehl, Mingo NWR

19. Four Sentenced in Iowa Baiting Investigation

Dan Burlison, St. Peters LE

20. Panel Presentation for Corps of Engineers

Peggy Nelson, ABA (DCR)

21. Region 3 Co-hosts Meeting on North American Plover Species at Risk

Jack Dingleline, East Lansing Field Office

22. Fish Aging Techniques Subject of Michigan Workshop

Adam Kowalski, Alpena FRO

23. Service Asking For Public Input on Tobico Marsh Restoration Plans

Scott Flaherty, External Affairs

24. Public Workshops to Gather Input on Bringing Back Perch to Green Bay

Mark Holey, Green Bay FRO

25. Ashland FRO staff prepare for State of Lake Superior Report

Henry Quinlan, Ashland FRO

26. Service Updates Wisconsin State Partners on Status of Nuisance Fish

Gary Czypinski, Ashland FRO

27. Lake Michigan Lake Sturgeon Status Assessment Project Begins

Robert Elliott, Green Bay FRO

28. Minnesota DNR Uses Federal Aid to Increase Public Boating Access at Lake Minnetonka

Julie Morin, Federal Aid

29. Ashland FRO Completes Freshwater Mussel Survey for Sokaogon Chippewa Reservation

Glenn Miller, Ashland FRO

30. Rock Island Biologists Share Endangered Species Information With More Than 1,000 Visitors

Rick Nelson, Rock Island Field Office

31. Big Stone National Wildlife Refuge Gets New Manager

Scott Flaherty, External Affairs

32. Mid-Winter Waterfowl Survey Completed

Sean Kelly, Migratory Birds & State Programs

33. Flex Funds Support Non-game Bird Conservation in Region 3

Steve Lewis, Migratory Birds & State Programs

Inside Region 3



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